

25X1A

Mystery Over Ailment

Wife of Powers Is 'Out of Danger'; Taken to Hospital Unconscious

By Thomas R. Kendrick

Staff Reporter

Barbara Powers, the attractive wife of U.S. pilot Francis Gary Powers, was reported "out of danger" last night at Georgetown University Hospital after being admitted unconscious and in critical condition early yesterday.

The circumstances of her admission immediately developed into a mystery of the type that has dogged the Powers family since the flyer bailed out over Russia. Police and hospital spokesmen issued conflicting statements about the case.

Seventh Precinct police reported that Mrs. Powers "was unconscious upon arrival and was treated for an overdose of approximately 28 Nembutal capsules." Nembutal is a barbiturate.

Dr. George E. Schreiner, a staff physician who treated Mrs. Powers, said last night that "we have no factual data bearing out the police report."

Mrs. Powers, 27, was treated for "acute indigestion," he said, "perhaps from a medication or food." The case is a very difficult diagnostic problem, he added.

Powers, who still works for the Central Intelligence Agency, accompanied his wife to the hospital. The couple has been living at the Hunting Towers apartments in Alexandria for the past three weeks.

A rescue squad took her to Alexandria Hospital where her stomach was pumped and she was treated for a "medication reaction." She was then transferred to Georgetown.

Police Lt. Nelson S. Rickey said Pvt. J. E. St. John went to the hospital about 8:30 a. m.—two hours after Mrs. Powers was admitted—and made a report from hospital records.

Schreiner said he filled out the hospital records himself. He said he was told by police that Nembutal capsules had been available to Mrs. Powers and regarded "this as interesting background information" useful in any such emergency case.

Mrs. Powers' sister-in-law, Janice Melvin of Falls Church, said she and Mrs. Powers both suffer from asthma and various allergies.

Late last night, Mrs. Powers regained consciousness and was able to speak, a hospital spokesman said. No visitors were allowed.